Effects of Two Systemic Insecticides on Damping-off Pathogens of Cotton

M. Houshyiar Fard¹, and T. Darvish Mojeni²

ABSTRACT

In vitro and greenhouse studies were conducted to investigate the possibility of an interaction between two systemic insecticides of: Thiodicarb (Larvin DF 80) and Imidacloprid (Guacho SW 70), and seedling disease organisms of: Rhizoctonia solani, Fusarium moniliforme and Pythium ultimum. When in vitro concentrations of Imidacloprid and Thiodicarb were applied, a fungistatic activity occurred. These insecticides inhibited mycelial growth of R. solani and F. moniliforme by 6.6-14.1 % and 15.2-70.8 %, respectively. F. moniliforme was more seriously affected by the insecticides while no significant effect was observed on P. ultimum. The pot experiments confirmed in vitro results so that, Thiodicarb provided excellent protection against pre- and post-emergence damping-off of the plant by 54.2% and 90.6 %, respectively.

Keywords: Antifungal activity, Fusarium moniliforme, Imidacloprid, Pythium ultimum, Rhizoctonia solani, Thiodicarb.

INTRODUCTION

Damping-off and seedling root rot are serious problems of cotton in cotton producing regions. Pythium ultimum Trow, Rhizoctonia solani Kühn and Fusarium spp. are the major fungi associated with the diseased cotton plants (Johnson et al., 1970; Minton and Garber, 1983; Colyer, 1988). The use of insecticides applied at planting time to control cotton early season pests has been recommended (Hawkins et al., 1966; Rummel and Quisenberry, 1979). Thiodicarb [(dimethyl n,n’-thio bis (methylimino) carbonyloxy bis ethan imidothioate)] belongs to the group of carbamates with stomach and contact action properties. This insecticide is of systemic property and is durably persistent in crop plants. It is recommended for control of the lepidoptera, coleoptera, and maggots in cotton and several other crops. Imidacloprid, 1-[(6-chore-Pyridy) methyl]-N-nitro-2-imidazolidinimine 4- Nitromethylene] belongs to the nitroguanidin group which has been commercially produced as FS 350 and WS 70 formulations. This insecticide has root-systemic property and is used for seed treatment in corn, cotton, sorghum, sunflower, potato, cereals as well as sugar beet against sucking and chewing pests. As is known, agricultural chemicals interact with biological systems in soil so that, a considerable amount of seed treating pesticides persistent in the upper soil layers around the treated seed could exert adverse effects on soil microorganisms. The side effects of pesticides on soil microflora have been studied by several authors (Hector et al., 2005; Shetty et al., 2000; Hemida, 1994; Abdel-Basset et al., 1992). Diarak et al. (2001) indicated that insecticides Isofenfos and Phorate had no inhibitory effects on the development of soil microorganisms. Chen

¹ Agricultural and Natural Resources Research Center of Guilan, Rasht, P.O Box: 41635-3394, Islamic Republic of Iran.
² Corresponding author, e-mail: mhoushiarfard@yahoo.com
³ Cotton Research Institute of Iran, Gorgan, Islamic Republic of Iran.
Jian et al. (1998) studied insecticidal effects of Iprobenfos and Tolcofos-methyl fungicides on rice brown plant hopper. The simultaneous effects of Dimethoate and Benomyl on soil organisms showed a reduction in collembola populations (Martikainen et al., 1998). The insecticide Selectron (Profenfos) caused a significant reduction in the total-N of Penicillium chrysogenum (Abdel-Malek et al., 1994). The application of the recommended concentrations of Dimethoate decreased the percentage of soybean colonization by the vesicular arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (Menendez et al., 1999). Khallil (1993) found that there was no appreciable effect of a low dose of Dimethoate (2.5 ppm) on vegetative growth, asexual and sexual sporulation of zoosporic fungi. Hexachlorocyclohexane, Carbofuran and Fenvalerate stimulated populations of Penicillium spp. in soil. The use of Fenvalerate inhibited the growth of Fusarium spp. but all insecticides reduced the population of Rhizopus in soil (Das and Mukherjee, 1998). The purposes of this study were to determine whether insecticides Thiodicarb and Imidacloprid had any possible effects on the most important fungi involved in diseases of cotton seedlings in Iran as well as their efficacy in reducing seedling death, resulting in increase in seedling emergence percentages.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**In Vitro Studies**

Three soil fungi namely: Rhizoctonia solani Kuhn, Fusarium moniliforme and Pythium ultimum Trow, were isolated from cotton seedlings (Gossypium hirsutum L.) that showed the typical damping-off symptoms and chosen as the test fungi on account of their high frequency. To identify the pathogenic fungi in cotton seedlings, 47 infected seedlings were collected. Samples of stem or root were cut into 3-5 mm pieces and surface-sterilized in 0.5-1 % (w/v) aqueous NaOCl for 1-3 minutes, then rinsed in S.D.W and damp dried on filter paper followed by some of them being planted on W.A. 2 %, acidic PDA or CMA-PARP culture media and incubated at 23±1°C for 4-7 days. The isolates were purified and identified based on the morphological characteristics of sexual and asexual organs, cardinal temperatures for growth and colony morphology according to the classification scheme of monographs. Inoculation tests were carried out under greenhouse conditions to determine the pathogenicity of isolates using proper inoculation methods.

The frequency of isolates of R. solani, F. moniliforme and P. ultimum were 60.1, 11.3 and 20.4 %, respectively. The two insecticides of Thiodicarb (Larvin® DF 80) and Imidaclopride (Guacho® SW 70) of 4 concentrations of 0, 5, 6 and 7/1,000 (gr. commercial product 1,000 ml⁻¹ solution) equal to 0, 4,000, 4,800 and 5,600 mg a.i 1,000 ml⁻¹ and 0, 3,500, 4,200 and 4,900 mg a.i 1,000 ml⁻¹ (recommended rates of early season seed treatment for thrips) were used in the experiments, respectively (concentration of water never exceeded 0.2% (v/v) in the medium). The culture medium used in the study was Czapeck-Dox Agar (CDA) while de-ionised water being used as solvent for the insecticides. After the medium had cooled to 50°C and while still liquid it was treated with the desired volumes of 3 different concentrations from stock solutions of insecticides prepared in sterile distilled water. About 20 ml of each insecticide-agar mixtures were poured into each of five the 9-cm glass Petri dishes, to give replicates. Plates were inoculated by transferring five-millimeter diameter discs (containing hyphal tips of the test fungal species from less than 1-week-old cultures) on PDA plates. The plates were incubated in dark at 23±1°C. At the end of incubation period, depending on the growth rate of each species on the control plate (untreated with insecticides), the diameter of each fungus colony was measured, and the inhibition of mycelial growth (against control) was
calculated by the equation: \((C–T/C)\times100\) where \(C\) is control growth rate (mm) and \(T\) the treated growth rate (mm) of insecticides in the treated plates (Vincent, 1947). The mean percent inhibition values were initially changed into \(\text{ArcSin}\sqrt{\text{Percentage}}\), then variance analysis (ANOVA) was carried out by using MSTAT-C software package and means compared by Duncan’s Multiple Range Test.

**Pot Culture Experiment**

This study was carried out to determine the impacts of Thiodicarb and Imidacloprid on pre- and post-emergence damping-off between germination and emergence stages and as well after emergence of the cotton seedlings, respectively. The certified cotton seeds of cv. Sahel (\(G.\ hirsutum\) L.) were treated with two levels of the formulated preparations of each insecticide (in terms of equivalent dosages of their commercial product per kg of seed), selected as based on the figures 1 and 2 obtained from in vitro evaluations namely: Thiodicarb 4.8 and 5.6 and Imidacloprid 4.2 and 4.9 g a.i kg\(^{-1}\) seed. For each treatment, 50 g of seed was shaken vigorously with 15 ml of aqueous suspension containing the required amount of an insecticide in glass bottle until the insecticide suspension was completely adsorbed by the seeds. Inoculum of each pathogen was grown separately on autoclaved sand (6 g)-maize meal (40 g+75 ml water) in 250-ml flasks (1 hour on three successive days). CFU or PFU were determined by suspending 0.1 g of colonized cornmeal-sand in 9.9 ml of S.D.W and plating dilutions onto PDA or selective media. The sterilized sandy loam soil was thoroughly mixed with 5, 1 and 6% (w/v) of inoculum of \(F.\ moniliforme, P.\ ultimum\) and \(R.\ solani\), to obtain the desired inoculum (Koyeas and Davatzi-Helena, 1980). Five treated seeds were sown in each 20 cm pot containing artificially infected soil in the greenhouse and regularly watered. The pots were arranged as a randomized design of 3 replicates for each insecticide treatment and for the untreated control. The number of seedlings that emerged in each pot was recorded in 7 and 15 days after sowing. The seedling emergence and relative efficacy of insecticides against the phenomenon of either pre- or post-emergence damping-off were assessed by the following equations:

\[
\text{Emergence} \% = \frac{100 \times (\text{Number of emerged seedling/Total number of sown seeds})}{100- \text{Emergence} \%}
\]

\[
\text{Pre-emergence damping-off} \% = 100\times[(A-B)/A]
\]

\[
\text{Post-emergence damping-off} \% = 100\times[(A-B)/A]
\]

**Figure 1.** Effect of insecticide type×insecticide concentration interaction on the growth inhibition rate (%) of \(Rhizoctonia solani\) on CDA medium.

- Thidicarb; □ Imidacloprid; * Mean of 5 replicates; Similar letters are not significantly different at 5% probability level.
Figure 2. Effect of insecticide type×insecticide concentration interaction on growth inhibition rate (% of F. moniliforme on CDA medium.
■: Thiodicarb; □: Imidacloprid; * Mean of 5 replicates; Similar letters are not significantly different at 5% probability level.

Where $A$ and $B$ are the number of healthy and diseased seedlings, respectively.

\[
\text{Disease control (\%) = } 100 \times \frac{(X-Y)}{X} \quad (4)
\]

Where $X$ and $Y$ are % damping-off in infested pots sown with the insecticide-treated and untreated seeds, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were significant differences of inhibition rate between the two insecticides for their effects on mycelial growth of $R. solani$ and $F. moniliforme$ (Table 1). There were also significant differences observed among the species in susceptibility to different concentrations of insecticides (Table 1). The percentage of mycelial growth inhibition varied among fungal isolates and insecticides (Tables 1 and 2). In other words, the insecticides inhibited (to some extent) the growth of most fungal species, although various degrees of growth inhibition could be noticed. Based on the number of species inhibited, Thiodicarb was found to be more effective than Imidacloprid and inhibited the growth of $F. moniliforme$ as well as $R. solani$ in the ranges of 34.1-78% and 8.5-14.1%, respectively (Table 1). $F. moniliforme$ was more affected by the insecticides, while no significant effect of insecticides used on $P. ultimum$ was

Table 1. Mean comparison of the effect of insecticide type on the growth of fungal pathogens on CDA medium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insecticide</th>
<th>$R. solani$</th>
<th>$F. moniliforme$</th>
<th>$P. ultimum$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth inhibition rate (%) $^a$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiodicarb</td>
<td>11.1 a</td>
<td>59.7 a</td>
<td>0 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imidacloprid</td>
<td>4.1 b</td>
<td>10.3 b</td>
<td>0 a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration of insecticide (g commercial product lit$^{-1}$) $^b$</th>
<th>$R. solani$</th>
<th>$F. moniliforme$</th>
<th>$P. ultimum$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 c</td>
<td>0 c</td>
<td>0 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 4.9 b</td>
<td>18.5 b</td>
<td>0 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 7.6 ab</td>
<td>39.9 a</td>
<td>0 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 10.4 a</td>
<td>46.6 a</td>
<td>0 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Mean of 5 replicates.
$^b$ Concentration of insecticide in CDA (g Commercial product lit$^{-1}$); Thiodicarb: 0, 4,000, 4,800 and 5,600 mg a.i lit$^{-1}$ and Imidacloprid: 0, 3,500, 4,200, 4,900 mg a.i lit$^{-1}$.

Means followed by similar letters in each column are not significantly different at 5% probability level.
Table 2. Effectiveness of insecticidal seed treatments on pre- and post-emergence damping-off of cotton cv. Sahel (Gossypium hirsutum L.) in greenhouse conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Dosage (mg a.i kg(^{-1})seed) (^a)</th>
<th>Seedling emergence % (^b)</th>
<th>Pre-emergence damping-off (^b)</th>
<th>Post-emergence damping-off (^b)</th>
<th>Disease Control %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thiodicarb</td>
<td>4800</td>
<td>19.6 b</td>
<td>29.4 b</td>
<td>41.3 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5600</td>
<td>36.4 a</td>
<td>40.9 a</td>
<td>40.6 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imidacloprid</td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>17.5 b</td>
<td>4.2 c</td>
<td>5 c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4900</td>
<td>23.2 b</td>
<td>10.6 c</td>
<td>15 b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.4 b</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Mean of 3 replicates.
\(^b\) 7-day and 15-day: Data recorded 7 and 15 days after sowing.
Similar letters in each column are not significantly different at 1% probability level.

observed. The two high concentrations of each insecticide exerted the most inhibition rates (%) on fungi (Table 1). R. solani and F. moniliforme were strongly inhibited by the insecticides so that, the Thiodicarb showed the strongest activity against F. moniliforme (6 times higher than that of Imidacloprid) (59.7%; Figure 3).

![Figure 3](image_url)

**Figure 3.** Effects of high concentrations of Thiodicarb (a) and Imidacloprid (b) on mycelial growth of F. moniliforme on CDA medium.

**Efficacy of Insecticides against Damping-off Disease**

With introduction of insecticides into the seed and plant environment a few possible interactions are conceivable. The results of pot experiments in the greenhouse conditions revealed that survival of seedlings in pot treated seeds with insecticides and fungal pathogens was significantly (P= 0.05) greater than the untreated ones. Thiodicarb provided excellent protection against pre- and post-emergence damping-off and seedling root rot by 54.2% and 90.6 %, respectively (Table 2). The treatments control and Imidacloprid had the least emergence and the rate of seed rot and pre-emergence damping-off in 15 days after sowing. As shown by the in vitro results, the two insecticides were completely ineffective against Pythium pre-emergence seed and seedling root rot. The in vivo performance of the two insecticides as seed treatment against damping-off and seedling root rot corresponded to some degree with their in vitro fungistatic activity against mycelial growth of R. solani and F. moniliforme isolates. The study confirmed the higher effectiveness of Thiodicarb as compared to Imidacloprid in reducing post-emergence damping-off of cotton seedlings. Thiodicarb exhibited excellent in vivo efficacy against pre-emergence damping-off disease. Thus, in the case of Thiodicarb, a strong in vitro effect can directly explain the in vivo potency for a considerable degree of damping-off disease control. It is apparent that pathogen-insecticide interaction can exist under in vitro and greenhouse conditions. However, because of adsorption
and metabolism phenomena in soils, these insecticides exhibit different effects in soil. The differences between results of in vitro and pot experiments are due to the difference between physiology of saprophytic growing of fungal hyphae in culture medium and infectious papagules for parasitizing host tissue in in vivo conditions.

REFERENCES


آزمایش دو حشره کش سیستمیک بر بیمارگرهای فارقی گیاهچه بنه

م. هوشیار فرد و ت. درویش مجنی

چکیده

در این تحقیق اثرات مقاول بین دو حشره کش سیستمیک تیویدکارب (Larvin DF 80) و Fusarium Rhizoctonia solani با قارچهای عوامل میکروبی بیماری گیاهچه بنه، در شرایط درون شیشه ای و گلخانه ای مورد بررسی قرار گرفت. نتایج نشان داد که این دو حشره کش به ترتیب به میزان 1/5-1/16 و جلوگیری کردند. F. moniliforme و R. solani 15/2-7/10 از رشد میکروبی گونه‌های حشره کش‌ها اثر بارداری گی بیشتری روی رشد داشتند. در حالی که اثر معنی‌داری مشاهده نشد. آزمایشات گلدانی نتایج آزمایشات درون شیشه ای را تأیید کرد به طوری که حشره کش تیویدکارب به ترتیب به میزان 1/5-1/0/6 و 1/5-1/0/6 درصد باعث کاهش بیماری مارک گیاهچه در قبل و بعد از خروج از خاک شد و حفاظت مطلوبی را در افراد کرد.